TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: JUNE 5, 2006

CMR: 253:06

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT WORK PLAN

RECOMMENDATION
Staff and the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) recommend that the City Council approve the work plan for the Comprehensive Plan amendment that will extend the horizon year of the Comp Plan through 2020. The PTC recommends incorporating an additional work plan task that would address two ZOU-related issues—implementing Program H-29 of the Comp Plan and updating the zoning map if necessary to correspond to any Comp Plan mapping changes. The PTC also recommends that the work plan specifically identify ZOU tasks and the Baylands Master update and Baylands commercial design guidelines that would be delayed as a result of the Comp Plan amendment.

DISCUSSION
On February 13, 2006, the Council directed staff to work with the PTC to develop a work plan to amend the existing Comprehensive Plan to no later than 2020. The focus of the amendment would be to ensure the sufficient public services are available to serve new housing development and that sufficient land for neighborhood-serving retail uses is preserved. The Council also expressed concern regarding the impacts of increased housing on public services such as parks, libraries and schools. The Council direction for development of the work plan included the following elements:

- Revise base conditions and update growth projections
- Update the land use map and land use designations
- Review appropriate Comprehensive Plan policies and programs
- Update the environmental analysis

Staff developed a draft work plan consistent with Council direction that was submitted to the PTC and is attached (see Attachment A). The work plan is structured to use the PTC meetings as the venue for public participation and input in the amendment process. Staff would also submit quarterly progress reports to the City Council through the duration of the Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

Staffing
The work plan would be undertaken by City staff augmented by consultant resources. Only specialized or technical tasks and overall project management would be contracted. An EIR
consultant, an urban design consultant, a planning consultant for team oversight, an economic analyst, and a facilitator for public meetings would complete the project team.

In order for the work plan to be implemented with existing staff, work priorities must be shifted. Since no new permanent staff positions are proposed, current staff would be reassigned to work on the amendment. In order to free up staff for the amendment work, the work effort on the ZOU scope would become more focused. The update of the Baylands Master Plan, preparation of commercial design guidelines for the Baylands and completion of the El Camino Schematic Master Plan Study would be delayed. Advance Planning staff’s involvement in processing review of various City development projects would also be reduced.

**COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

On May 24, 2006, the PTC reviewed the draft Comprehensive Plan Work Plan and timeline for completion of the amendment. The draft meeting minutes are attached (Attachment B). The PTC comments on the work plan focused on four main topics; effects on the ZOU; staffing/timeline; noticing and public participation; and delays of the Baylands projects.

The reduction in the scope of the ZOU was a concern to several of the Commissioners, and the PTC requested that staff highlight to Council that implementation of the work plan was dependent on delaying some of the elements of the ZOU as well as deferring zoning map changes and other follow-up ZOU tasks. The PTC requested that staff fully identify for Council key ZOU issues that would be delayed in the revised ZOU work program (Attachment C). The PTC recommended that, following completion of the Comprehensive Plan amendment, the remaining ZOU work items be re-evaluated and adjusted as needed based on Comprehensive Plan changes.

Some PTC members expressed skepticism regarding the timeline and staffing; the timeline was ambitious and staff resources limited. Staff explained that if the ZOU could be focused and expedited as proposed, the staff currently working on the ZOU could begin to gradually transition to work on the amendment. Furthermore, staff explained that the work plan calls for consultant assistance in preparing the amendment. Staff acknowledged that the timeline is considered aggressive. Staff pointed out that it is preliminary and will be adjusted after the consultant team is selected; however, the intent is to complete the amendment within a tight timeframe.

All of the Commissioners stressed the need for effective noticing and outreach once the amendment process begins in order to fully engage public participation. Several of the Commissioners suggested that staff pursue additional methods for public outreach including placing notices on the City’s website calendar, in school district newsletters and utility bills, and informing stakeholder groups.

The PTC also expressed concern regarding the delay of the Baylands commercial design guidelines and, particularly, work on the Baylands Master Plan since that project has experienced several delays in order to enable other projects to go forward. The PTC acknowledged, however, that for the amendment to proceed, all the tasks that staff identified will have to be deferred.
There was unanimous support (Commissioner Bialson absent) for the staff recommendation to approve the work plan with additional work plan tasks that would address two ZOU-related issues--implementing Program H-29 of the Comp Plan (discouraging reductions in existing housing units) and updating the zoning map if necessary to correspond to any Comp Plan mapping changes. In addition, the PTC requested that a general schedule be forwarded to Council for completion of ZOU tasks and the Baylands Master Plan update and Baylands commercial design guidelines that would be delayed as a result of the Comp Plan amendment. These recommendations are reflected in the work plan and ZOU work program schedule (see Attachments D and E).

The only member of the public to address the item at the meeting was the Chair of the Child Care Advisory Committee who requested that through the amendment process the City include a policy in the Comprehensive Plan that considers the consequences for the supply of child care in Palo Alto with new development that comes before the City.

RESOURCE IMPACT
The estimated budget for the project is $850,000 over the project timeline. If Council approves the work plan, staff proposes to return with the detailed budget for the project along with a financing plan. The plan will include funding recommendations to be included in the 2006-2007 mid-year budget and the 2007-2009 proposed budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
This work plan is not considered a project under CEQA.

PREPARED BY:  
__________________________
JULIE CAPORGNO
Advance Planning Manager

DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW:  
__________________________
STEVE EMSLIE
Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:  
__________________________
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment A: PTC staff report dated April 19, 2006
Attachment B: Draft PTC minutes from May 24, 2006
Attachment C: ZOU Work Program Revisions
Attachment D: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Plan
Attachment E: ZOU Work Program Schedule
Attachment F: Colleague’s Memo from February 13, 2006